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Fact Sheet

School Experiences of Off-Reserve First Nations Children Aged 6 to 14

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The 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) provides an extensive set of data about Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve First Nations adults 15 years and over and children 6 to 14, living in urban, rural, and northern locations across Canada. The APS was designed to provide a picture of the lifestyles and living conditions of Métis, Inuit, and First Nations peoples in Canada.

The survey was developed by Statistics Canada in partnership with the following national Aboriginal organizations: Congress of Aboriginal Peoples; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Métis National Council; National Association of Friendship Centres; and the Native Women's Association of Canada. The following federal departments sponsored the 2006 APS: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Health Canada, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Canadian Heritage.

School Experiences of Off-Reserve First Nations Children Aged 6 to 14

This fact sheet provides information on the school experiences among First Nations children aged 6 to 14 who are living off-reserve. It also examines some of the factors associated with how well they were doing at school, as perceived by parents or guardians who responded to the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) in 2006.

Findings are representative of First Nations children (6 to 14 years) living off reserve in the ten provinces and of all First Nations children in the territories.

According to the 2006 Census, there were 78,325 First Nations children aged 6 to 14 living off-reserve in Canada. These children made up about 2% of all Canadian children aged 6 to 14.

In some areas of Canada, these children represent a significant proportion of the total population aged 6 to 14, and in other areas, they are a minority. For example, 39% of children aged 6 to 14 in the Northwest Territories and 29% in the Yukon is a First Nations person. First Nations children living off-reserve make up 9% of children aged 6 to 14 in Saskatchewan and 7% in Manitoba. In Ontario, the province with the largest population of off-reserve First Nations children (19,665), they represent only 1% of the total population aged 6 to 14.

Perceived school achievement

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey asked parents to rate how well their child was doing in school, based on their knowledge of their child's school work, including report cards. In 2006, 43% of off-reserve First Nations children were reported to be doing "very well", and 27% were reported to be doing "well", at school. About a quarter (24%) were doing "average" at school, and 5% "poorly" or "very poorly".

Off-reserve First Nations girls were more likely than boys to be doing "very well" or "well" at school (75% versus 65%). As well, children aged 6 to 10 were more likely than those aged 11 to 14 to be doing "very well" or "well" at school (74% versus 64%).

Factors associated with relatively higher perceived school achievement

Getting along with teachers or classmates

Generally speaking, off-reserve First Nations children were reported to have positive relationships at school. About 85% were reported by their parents to be getting along well with teachers, and about 81% were reported to be getting along well with friends and classmates.

All other factors being equal, off-reserve First Nations children who were reported to have hardly any or no problems with their teachers or with their friends and classmates were more likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children who had occasional or constant problems.

Parental satisfaction with school practices

The majority of off-reserve First Nations children had parents who were generally satisfied with their child's school practices. For instance, most children had parents who agreed or strongly agreed that their child's school provided enough information on their academic progress (92%), attendance (95%), and behaviour (91%). Most children had parents who were satisfied with the level of discipline (agreed or strongly agreed: 85%), the quality of teaching (89%), and the availability of extracurricular activities (74%) at their child's school.

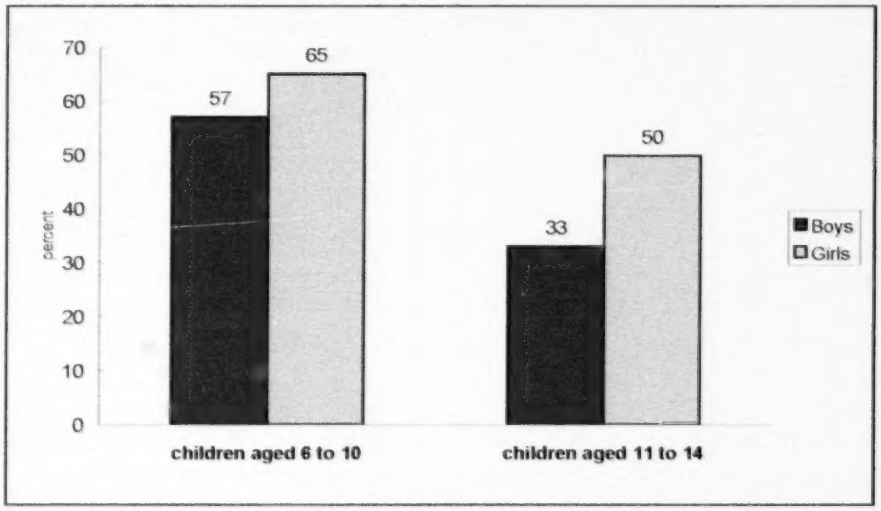
All other factors being equal, off-reserve First Nations children whose parents were very satisfied with school practices were more likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children whose parents were less satisfied.

Reading books everyday

According to their parents, off-reserve First Nations children aged 6 to 10 were more likely than those aged 11 to 14 to read everyday (61% versus 41%). As well, girls were more likely than boys to read everyday (58% versus 46%). This gender difference was more pronounced among older than younger children (see chart 1).

All other factors being equal, off-reserve First Nations children who read books everyday were more likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children who did not read everyday.

Chart 1
Percentage of off-reserve First Nations children aged 6 to 14 reading books everyday, by sex and age group, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2006, Children and Youth component.

Playing sports and taking part in art or music activities

The 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey found that sports were the most popular out-of-school activity among off-reserve First Nations children. More than one-fifth (21%) participated in sports 4 or more times per week. Spending time with Elders ranked second at 14%, followed by taking part in art or music activities at 9%. Boys participated in sports more often than girls, whereas girls took part in art or music activities more often than boys.

All other factors being equal, off-reserve First Nations children who played sports at least once a week were more likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children who played sports less frequently or not at all. Similarly, children who took part in art or music activities at least once a week were more likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children who engaged in these activities less frequently or not at all.

Household income

The 2006 Census shows that off-reserve First Nations children living in urban areas were more likely to be in households at the lowest income range as compared with those living in rural areas. As well, off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status were more likely to be in households at the lowest income range compared with their non-status counterparts.

All other factors being equal, off-reserve First Nations children who were in households at the highest household income range were more likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children who were at the lowest range.

Factors associated with relatively lower perceived school achievement

Absence from school

The 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey found that a small proportion (4%) of off-reserve First Nations children was reported to have been absent for 2 or more weeks in a row during the school year.

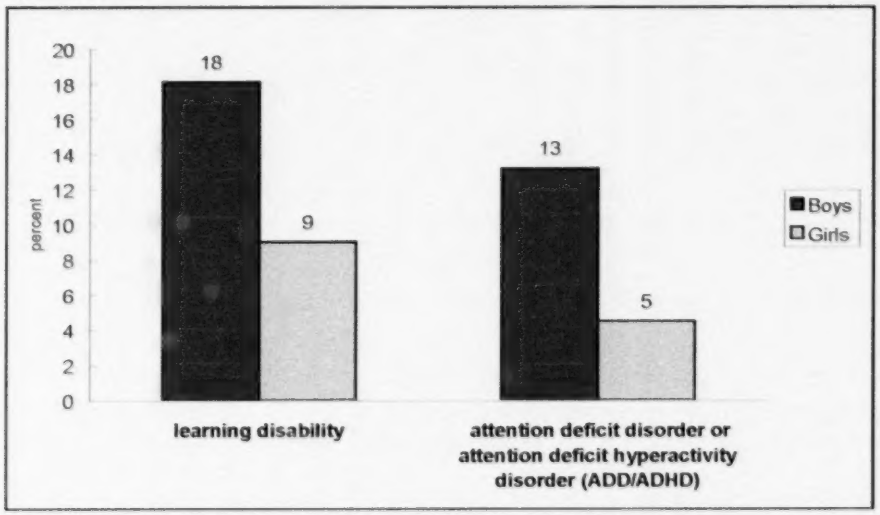
All other factors being equal, off-reserve First Nations children who had been absent for at least 2 weeks during the school year were less likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children who had not.

Learning disability and attention deficit disorder

The 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey found that off-reserve First Nations boys were twice as likely as girls (18% versus 9%) to have been diagnosed with a learning disability. Boys were also more than twice as likely as girls (13% versus 5%) to have been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (see chart 2).

All other factors being equal, off-reserve First Nations children who had been diagnosed with a learning disability or with attention deficit disorder were less likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children who had not.

Chart 2
Rate of learning disability and attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder reported for off-reserve First Nations children aged 6 to 14, by sex, 2006



Source: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2006, Children and Youth component.

Residential school attendance

The 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey found that 12% of off-reserve First Nations children had parents who had been students in the residential school system that operated across Canada between 1830 and the 1990s. Off-reserve First Nations children with registered Indian status were more likely than those without status to have parents who had been residential school students (17% versus 3%). The Territories had the largest proportion of First Nations children whose parents had been residential school students at 38%, followed by the Prairies at 17%.

All other factors being equal, off-reserve First Nations children whose parents attended residential schools were less likely to be doing "very well" or "well" at school than children whose parents did not attend residential schools.

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6 by telephone: 613-951-5979 or by e-mail at sasd-dssea@statcan.gc.ca.

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